DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 249 545 CS 504 704

AUTHOR Rankis, Olaf E.; Biggers, J. Thompson
TITLE North and Latin American Business Negotiations: An Assessment of Differences in Interpersonal Perception.
PUB DATE Nov 82
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (68th, Louisville, KY, November 4-7, 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; Behavior Patterns; *Business Communication; *Communication Problems; Communication Research; Comparative Analysis; *Cultural Differences; *Intercultural Communication; *Latin American Culture; Latin Americans; Nonverbal Communication; *North American Culture; Perception; Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

Both North American and Latin American business professionals were investigated in a study that focused on the perceived communication problems between the two groups. A number of major areas of interest were considered, including the following: (1) source of credibility (what dimensions of personality were seen as most desirable in the intercultural business counterpart); (2) locus of power (which group was perceived as most influential during the negotiation process); (3) competitive posture (business equality and aggressiveness); (4) communication uncertainty (the degree to which individuals felt sure of themselves in the negotiation context); (5) perceived understanding of communication intent; (6) decision making style; (7) perceived apprehension during the encounter; and (8) nonverbal behavioral differences. The communication assessment instrument that was used contained five sections of eight communication constructs. The data were collected in two separate stages: first from 30 bank executives representing various locations in Latin America, and second from subjects interviewed at the Miami Florida International Airport. Results indicated several perceptual differences existing between North American and Latin American business professionals, as well as some striking similarities. Members of both groups were very aware of the great possibility of being misunderstood by the other group. (HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED249545

NORTH AND LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS: AN ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENCES IN INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION.

Olaf E. Rankis

J. Thompson Biggers

Department of Communication

University of Miami

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Olaf E. Rankis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 204 705

Intercultural communication has become an increasingly important topic for the American business community, and as such, is receiving increased attention from academicians and business professionals alike. Our world has become increasingly smaller due to sophisticated modes of transportation, while the nature of foreign bilateral business negotiation has remained relatively static. In reality, with the present state of the art in high speed communication and transportation, the "International Division Headquarters" of any given company is more apt to be involved in the direct negotiation process, instead of, or in addition to, the organization's "man in Rio." Business professionals, accordingly, must be trained in the subtleties of intercultural communication, if they are to be successful.

We have witnessed the effects of international communication breakdowns, due to misunderstanding and insensitivity towards new emergent political developments, in Iran, Libya, and Nicaragua. In Brazil, this insensitivity has lead to the loss of multi-million dollar nuclear energy contracts in favor of firms from the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ackermann (1976, p. 299) suggested that the "common results of transcultural misreadings are mistrust, anger, and pulling out of 'sure' deals--that is, ultimate personal and corporate loss." In addition, Ackermann argues that companies involved in transcultural contexts may, in some cases, be sending individuals to negotiate contracts who have no "interests in, background of, or aptitude for dealing comfortably and effectively with, foreign nationals." To support this assertion, Ackermann claims that from 33% to 50% of North American overseas executives return home before the expected end of their tour. This is confirmed by a recent article abstract in the International Executive (1980) which indicates that an average 40% attrition

rate of expatriate employees can be anticipated if careful screening is not done. The figure can be lessened to 24% with a cultural orientation program of some sort. Moreover, Adams and Kobayashi (1969) indicate that approximately four-fifths of all foreign business representatives do not complete their missions in Japan.

Besides the obvious costs in lost business, continual retraining of replacement personnel, the estimated initial cost to the organization averages, according to The International Executive (1980, p. 24), approximately $50,000 in moving one family overseas. Even the conservative attrition rate of 24% then would cost U.S. and multinational corporations many millions of dollars annually just for relocations. The obvious question remains, IS ALL OF THIS NECESSARY?

There is no need for argument that the lack of understanding due to cultural differences can effect the business negotiation process. Communication itself is at the seat of either understanding or misunderstanding. Rather than speculate as to what type of inter-cultural training is needed among international business colleagues, a more molecular approach should be considered. That is, consideration of person-to-person perception in the communicative context should yield information relative to appropriate training topics in order to correct emergent problems. It would be useful to know how the North American business professional initially "sizes up" the foreign business professional. What criteria for these judgements are used? Likewise, what are the answers to the same questions from the perspective of the foreign business professional, with respect to their North American colleagues? We have seen from the experience of others that different cultures have different priorities in the way business is

formally conducted, and perceived. Hall and Whyte (1966, p. 568) define one such situation:

> "The head of a large, successful Japanese firm commented: 'you Americans have a terrible weakness. We Japanese know about it and exploit it every chance we git. You are impatient. We have learned that if we just make you wait long enough, you will agree to anything!"

All business organizations attempt to discover the most self advantageous approach in dealing with the customer. Unfortunately, sometimes the most beneficial, practical, and logical path in the short-run may lead to the predictions made by Ackermann, over the long term. This seems to be a lesson that, we, in North America, still have not learned. The purpose of the present investigation was to determine the perceived intercultural communication problems and assess their significance in the context of initial business negotiations. Specifically, this investigation focused on the perceived communication problems of North American business professionals (NABP) and Latin American business professionals (LABP) in their first three meetings. Latin Americans in this study include those individuals who permanently reside in Central and South American countries and are of hispanic cultural backgrounds. North Americans are those permanently reside in the U.S. or Canada, and who are of non-hispanic cultural backgrounds. "Business professionals" are individuals, who, as a matter of occupation, are normally involved in face to face international business negotiations.

This investigation was exploratory and not hypothesis-testing. A number of major areas of interest were considered. They were:

1. Source credibility (i.e., what dimensions of personality are seen as most desirable in the intercultural business counterpart).

2. Locus of power (i.e., during the negotiation process which group is perceived as most influential).

3. Competitive posture (business equality and aggressiveness).

4. Communication uncertainty (i.e., the degree to which individuals feel sure of themselves in the negotiation context).

5. Perceived understanding of communication intent.

6. Decision making style.

7. Perceived apprehension during the encounter.

8. Nonverbal behavioral differences (i.e. gestures, distance used during discussions, punctuality, etc.).

METHODS

SUBJECTS

The sample for this study consists of an overall n of 60, of which 33 were LABPs and 27, NABPs respectively. While the n initially appears small, it is argued that the target population under study is also quite small, and that this sample is sufficiently representative of that population for our purposes.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The subjects were fairly evenly matched in terms of demographics. That is, Multiple Chi-Square analysis demonstrated no significant statistical difference among the following demographic categories: Number of company employees; number of years in operation; number of years with the present company; present position with the company; number of years in present position; education; number of visits to the U.S./Latin America (which ever is appropriate); percentage of business involving its American or Latin American counterpart. It is of interest to note that the NABP sample (n=27) 59% were either company Chief Executive Officers (CEO) or senior vice presidents. This was true for 42% of the LABP sample (n=33). Additionally, in terms of

education, the overall frequencies indicated that 89.6% of the S's had at least a baccalaureate degree, with 31% having an MBA.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

There were three satistically significantly different categories. The first reflected a significant difference in terms of the number of divisions in the company (χ^2=10.02, df=2, p=.007). It was apparent the the NABP had significantly smaller companies than the LABP group. The second significant difference was found in terms of the activity of the NABP and LABP company (χ^2=14.92, df=4, p=.005). That is, the NABP company was typically involved in some aspect of manufacturing, while the LABP company was involved with finance or banking activities. The last significant difference in terms of demographics was in the major responsibility of the respondent (χ^2=10.21, df=4, p=.04). This was, of course, related to the actual activity of the company, i.e., marketing, sales, banking, etc.

Overall Analysis of the demographic data suggests that the two samples are comparable. Individuals from the North American and Latin American samples seem to exhibit similar personal characteristics. That is, differences that exist seem to reflect differences in the companies that the individuals work for, rather than differences in the people themselves. The two samples did differ in the types of companies that they work for. It appears that the size of Latin American companies involved in trade with North America is larger than the size of the typical company in North America that is doing business in Latin America. 43% of the North American business reporting had less than one hundred employees. 41% of the Latin American business had over four hundred employees. 51% of the North American companies have fewer than four divisions while 45% of the Latin American businesses have

over eleven divisions. This may suggest that it is much easier for a North American company, no matter what size, to engage in international trade. The activities of the companies represented are also different. The Latin American sample is heavily involved in banking, 38%. The North American sample, on the other hand, is made up of individuals who catagorize themselves as being involved in "manufacturing". The difference is, no doubt, a result of the sampling methods employed.

MATERIALS

An instrument was designed to provide an initial communication assessment analysis of LABP and NABP S's (see appendix B). The instrument contained five sections dealing with eight communication constructs. Section one asked Ss to rank order, in terms of importance to a successful business meeting, four dimensions of credibility; competence, honesty, composure, and sociability (see McCroskey and Wheeless, 1976; Hovland, Janis, and Kelly, 1953).

Section two asked Ss to respond on a five-point agree-disagree continuum (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), to each of eleven statements. Four statements were designed to assess Ss' perception of the LOCUS OF POWER in the business meeting:

2a. They feel they are in control of the meeting.

2c. They feel obligated to move the meeting along from one agenda item to the next.

2j. There are substantial differences in how Latin (North) American business persons conduct meetings.

2k. Generally, my Latin (North) American collegues try to control the first three meetings.

Reliability was estimated using Coefficient Alpha which proved to be .87 for this scale. Two statements measured Ss' perceptions of their business

organization's COMPETITIVE POSTURE in comparison to their intercultural counterpart:

2b. Believe they represent a business which is inferior to its American (Latin) Counterpart.

2d. They feel their company is equal to yours.

The reliability proved to be .83 for this scale. The DEGREE OF COMMUNICATION UNCERTAINTY about how the meeting should proceed was gauged by four statements

2e. I am bothered that my Latin (North) American counterpart appears uncertain about how typical American business meetings are conducted.

2f. They appear to be uninterested in getting started with the business at hand

2h. I worry about doing or saying the "wrong" things in the meeting.

2i. My Latin (North) American colleagues appear in attentive during the meetings.

Coefficient Alpha was .92 for this scale. A final statement assessed the degree of PECEIVED UNDERSTANDING of the counterpart:

2g. There is a greater chance that my intentions will be misunderstood by Latin (North) American business persons than by North (Latin) Americans.

The overall reliability estimate combining all scales in section two was .96; while total instrument reliability was .98.

The perceived "typical" DECISION-MAKING STYLE utilized in the intercultural counterpart's organization was determined in section three. Four decision making styles were specified: "top-down", "autonomous", "lassez-faire", and "democratic" (see Goldhaber, 1974). Additional space was provided so that the S could specify a decision making style other than those described.

The fourth section dealt with an overall assessment of PERCEIVED APPREHENSION. Each S was asked to compare their perceived level of

apprehension during a business meeting with respect to the imagined anxiety of their counterpart (see McCroskey, 1977).

The fifth section asked Ss to respond by noting differences in the physical communication style of their intercultural counterpart. Moreover, if differences were noted, the S was asked to respond if the difference was bothersome. The nonverbal behaviors that were assessed in this section were: kinesics (use of gestures), punctuality, grooming, proxemics (physical distance during communication), manner of dress, paralinguistic cues (way in which things are said), and haptics (use of touch).

A sixth section was included that allowed the Ss to make any prose statements that they wished, regarding the purpose of the study.

While one instrument was designed, two translations were manifest, Spanish and Standard American English. The Spanish version asks the LABP to assume they were meeting with a native NABP in the NABP's office. The Standard American English version asked the NABP to assume that they were meeting with a native LABP in the LABP's office. In both translated versions, perceptions are limited to the first three meetings, by instructions placed on the instrument. The number "three" was selected on the basis of Hall's (1976) suggestion that the Latin American uses the first three meetings to get to know his business counterpart before seriously engaging in trade negotiations.

A seperate demographic profile for each S was included with the instrument, a copy is found in appendix A.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

The completed instrument and demographic sheet was given to three impartial expert reviewers for the purpose of assessing its construct and content validity. This procedure produced some useful changes which enhanced

the instrument's construct validity. The final instrument was then translated into Spanish by a professional translator/interpretor who was asked to take great care in insuring linguistic equivalence of the items. The Spanish version was then reviewed by several Hispanic graduate students, who separately deemed the translated version to be correct, and not substantially different from the Standard English version.

PROCEDURES

The data were collected in two separate stages. During the first stage, data were collected from 30 bank executives representing various locations in Latin America. These individuals were attending an advanced business symposium in Miami. Questionnaires were administered by two bilingual research assistants who had no knowledge of the hypotheses, but who had sufficient information in order to field possible questions regarding the completion of the instrument.

The second stage of data collection involved the direct solicitation of Ss at the Miami International Airport. Individuals sitting in the departure areas awaiting flights to Latin America were solicited by bilingual research assistants, who had no knowledge of the hypotheses, but could field questions with regard to the completion of the instrument.

RESULTS

SOURCE CREDIBILITY (Credibility dimensions)

This item asked each S to rank order the following the four previously mentioned characteristics in terms of their importance in evaluating an intercultural business colleague. Univariate analysis demonstrated no

significant statistical difference between the way NABPs and LABPs ordered these dimensions. It should be pointed out, however, that the LABP tended to numerically place "sociable" ahead of "composed"; while the NABP reversed this order. This is consistent with Hall's (1966, p. 569, observation of the Latin American):

> Apart from his cultural need to "feel right" about a new relationship, there is the logic of his business system. One of the realities of his life is that it is dangerous to enter into business with someone over whom you have no more than formal, legal 'control.' In the past decades, his legal system has not always been as firm as ours and he had learned through experience that he needs the sanctions implicit in the informal system of friendship.

Individuals from both groups ranked the four concepts included under source credibility in the same manner: competent, honest, composed, sociable. The last two concepts are tied for third. There is a tendency for the North American to rank sociable last and for the Latin American to rank the same concept third. While this tendency is not significant, the results of the Friedman test suggests that there is a difference present in the ranked positions, while the Chi-square statistic does not indicate any difference in the ordered ranking of any concept for the two groups. That is, the two groups seem to agree on this ordering of the concepts. It is of interest to some readers that in evaluating another business professional, both groups in this study seem to value competence over honesty.

LOCUS OF POWER (who controls whom during the meeting):

(2a) -They feel they are in command of the meeting-

(2c) -They feel obligated to move the meeting along from one agenda item to the next-

(2j) -There are substantial differences in how Latin American and North American business persons conduct meetins-

(2k) -Generally my (North American) (Latin American) colleagues try to control the first three meetings-

Item (2a) produced no significant differences in responses, with both groups of Ss equally distributing their responses across the scale.

Item (2c), produced a significant Chi-square statistic (χ^2=15.87, df=4, p=.005). It appears from the data, that the LABP thinks that the NABP feels obligated to move the meeting along; while the NABP perceives the LABP as not feeling this obligation. Item (2j) produced non-significant results. The data reveal a high degree of agreement that meetings are differentially conducted. Item (2k) produced significant results (χ^2=9.62, df=4, p=.05). Using the neutral position as a balance point, the LABPs were evenly split between agreement and disagreement; while the NABPs clearly disagreed. That is, the LABPs were more likely to have ambivalent feelings as to their perception of the NABP trying to control the meeting. The NABP, on the other hand, did not see the LABP as attempting to control the meeting.

Generally, the results of these four items suggest that both North American and Latin American business persons believe that the North American business feels more powerful. When asked if their counterpart represented a company that was inferior to theirs, the Latin American tended to disagree (78.2%); while the North American tended to agree (48%). This would seem to indicate a partially shared view that the North American organization is perceived to be superior to the Latin American organization; a finding which seems strange when we consider that the North American organizations in this

study were typically smaller than their Latin counterparts. Examination of the response to this item, by the size of the company represented by the individual respondent, does not shed any light on this relationship. It would be tempting to suggest that the power response is a function of the size of the company that one represents-- this does not appear to be the case, in this study however, in as much as correlation between these factors proved to be non-significant.

The same power response is noted in item (2c). When asked who is reponsible for moving the meeting along from one agenda item to the next, both groups indicate that it is the North American. It does not seem to matter where the meeting is taking place. The Latin business professional was responding in the context of being in the North American office, but the North American was in the context of the Latin American office.

When asked if the North American and the Latin American companies in a negotiation were equal, there was no significant difference between the responses of the two groups. That is, both groups disagreed with this statement. This seems to reinforce the idea that both groups view the interactants as unequal with the North American as being the dominant party.

The perceived power in the business situation is again tested in item (2k). When asked who is in control of business meetings, North Americans indicate that they are; while many Latin respondents seem to agree. That is, the general perception seems to be that North Americans are more actively involved in "control"-type behavior.

Item (2a) did not reveal any significant differences. This may be due to the Latins' unwillingness to admit openly that they feel "one-down" but a different conceptualization is also possible. In the items that ask about perception of power it is clear that both groups believe that the North American perceives himself to be more powerful. When the item deals with

actual power, the result is quite different. It could be that the Latins are telling us that the North American feels that he is more powerful, but, in actuality, he is not. Only further research can clarify this relationship.

COMPETITIVE POSTURE:

(Latin/North Americans)

(2b) -Believe they represent a business which is inferior to it's intercultural counterpart-

(2d) -They feel their company is equal to yours-

These items seemed to corroborate the responses for Locus of Control just discussed. Item (2b) produced a statistically significant Chi-square (χ^2=17.06, df=4, p=.001). Unlike the LABP, who disagreed and strongly disagreed that the NABP felt inferior, the NABP was evenly split between agreement and disagreement as to the LABP's perception of the LABP's company. In other words, the NABP in no way was considered to feel inferior, but perceived the LABP as feeling inferior. Item (2d), was statistically non-significant, with both groups disagreeing that the other feels equal. The direction is that the LABP strongly disagrees with the statement, while the NABP seems to agree. It appears (tongue in cheek) that the LABP may feel placed in the "one-down" position when dealing with the NABP.

COMMUNICATION UNCERTAINTY:

(2e) -I am bothered that my (North American) (Latin American) counterpart appears uncertain about how typical (North American) (Latin American) business meetings are conducted-

(2f) -They appear to be uninterested in getting started with the business at hand-

(2h) -I worry about doing or saying the "wrong" things in the meeting-

(21) -My (North American) (Latin American) colleagues appear inattentive during the meetings-

These items were designed to measure the degree to which the two groups felt sure of themselves, in the negotiation context. None of the questions produced any significant differences; however, responses to items concerning proper conduct of meetings and interest in conducting business were fairly similar, with Latin Americans tending to more strongly disagree than did North Americans.

PERCEIVED UNDERSTANDING

Both groups were in agreement that they were likely to be mutually misunderstood.

It seems clear that both groups recognize that a problem in communication exists. This point is further substantiated by the item that asked if meetings were conducted differently by the two groups. Again, there was agreement that differences exist. If it is obvious to these parties that these differences exist, and that the possibility of misunderstanding exists, it may be that these differences are not mutually recognizable. In other words, each group may be ignorant of the fact that the other group feels the same way.

DECISION MAKING STYLES

There was no significant difference for this section. Both groups had fairly equivalent responses across the decision-making spectrum.

It was our initial belief that the decision making style of these two groups would be perceived differently. This was not the case. There was no significant difference between the two groups. Each group spread its responses across all catagories. Possibly the best explanation of this

finding is expressed by one of the subject's free responses to this question, "It depends on the company and the situation."

PERCEIVED APPREHENSION

This measure asked the individual to compare the degree of nervousness that they would feel in the first three meetings with the degree of nervousness that they counterpart would feel. There was no significant difference between the two groups. North Americans tended to say that they would be less nervous while Latin Americans tended to say that neither would be nervous. The response of the NABPs may be the result of their feelings of greater power in the meeting. The LABPs' response may be a function of their concept of manhood (machismo), but additional research is needed to accurately address these issues.

Moreover, since we found no significant difference between the two groups, we wondered if there might be another variable that would explain the variance of scores. Nervousness scores were examined in terms of the size of the company one represented, individual experience, number of visits to the other country, number of meetings a month with representatives from the other hemisphere, and so on. None of these factors produced a significant result. This leads us to a trait conceptualization of nervousness. That is, the results here are not in disagreement with the commonly accepted conceptualization of Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1977).

NONVERBAL BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES

USE OF GESTURES. Both groups agreed that gestures were different (61% LABP, 76% NABP). This indicates that the differences are noticed. But when asked if the difference bothered them, both groups indicated that it did not. (93% LABP, 84% NABP).

PUNCTUALITY. Was described as different and significantly bothering ($p<.004$) the NABP, but not the LABP. One of the most commonly discussed differences between NABPs and LABPs is the use of time or chronemics. It is not surprising that members of both of our sample groups reported that the use of time was different (80% NABP, 80% LABP). A significant difference did exist between the two groups when asked if the different use of time bothered them. The NABPs overwhelmingly say yes (60%); while the LABPs even more powerfully say no (80.6%). This finding is curious in several ways. Is this saying that the NABP is less flexible than his LABP counterpart? Or is it that the NABP is more willing to admit that he is bothered?

GROOMING. An interesting result is generated when the subjects are asked if grooming is different. There is no difference between the two samples. Both groups' majority response is that it is not different. However, 40% of each group indicates that it is different. Even though it is not the major response, it would be interesting to discover what this 40% is reacting to. When asked if the difference in grooming bothered them, the answer was a nearly unanimous "no" (100% NABP, 96.8% LABP).

PHYSICAL DISTANCE (Proxemics). The use of distance was also investigated. The results did not produce any significant differences. An interesting trend does exist, however. There is a tendency for the NABP to say that the use of distance is not different (60% not different, 40% is different); while the LABP indicates that there is a difference (45% not different, 55% is different). This difference is not significant, but is suggestive of further research. We have believed for years that the two groups used space differently while interacting. Does this finding indicate that this is not so for individuals involved in international trade? Or is it the case that they are simply not aware of the differences? It is also

interesting to note that if a difference does exist, the LABP is much more aware of it than is the NABP counterpart. When asked if the difference in use of distance bothered these individuals, the answer was strongly "no".

MANNER OF DRESS. Manner of dress was the next aspect of nonverbal communication that was examined. Again, there was no difference in the two groups. Both groups agreed that dress was not different and that it did not bother them. It is interesting to note, again, the same split in response on this item as was observed on the grooming item. 40% of each group indicated that there was a difference in dress. This is suggestive of further research.

WAY IN WHICH THINGS ARE SAID. No differences were observed, but, both groups agreed, by only slight majorities, that there was a difference in language style. This difference did not seem to bother either group.

TOUCHING BEHAVIOR. While no differences were observed, opinion on the use of touch was strongly divided in both groups. It is interesting to note that nearly half of each group indicates that touch is used differently while half says it is not. It is clear that this is an area that could use further study. Neither group indicated that the use of touch bothered them.

In this section of the study we asked individuals if certain behaviors were different and if the differences bothered them. There are obvious limitations to this method. We cannot conclude from these findings that the reported behaviors are indeed different, although we can say that they are perceived as being different. We can also infer from the second part of this measure that individuals are cognizant that the differences in some nonverbal behaviors are bothersome to them. The results of this section must be seen as somewhat subjective and limited in their interpretability.

SECTION SIX (Descriptive Prose Additions)

There were two major themes stated by the LABP, the NABP doesn't speak Spanish and expects the LABP to learn English, and that the NABP wants all the business.

The major theme for the NABPs is that there was NO DIFFERENCE!

DISCUSSION

Generally, from the results we can conclude that there are several perceptual differences that continue to exist between North American and Latin American business professionals. These differences involve critical components of successful interpersonal encounters which when are at variance can lead to the predictions of Ackermann mentioned earlier.

The results of this study are limited by several factors. It is an exploratory study employing a "shot gun" approach (i.e. numerous variables and general responses are considered).

This study was intended as a preliminary investigation into the area of international trade and the communication behaviors that are of importance to that endeavor. In that regard the results should be taken as only preliminary, and tentative.

The present sample may provide a limitation to the results. The authors were, themselves, surprised at the high percentage of top managment individuals who were part of the sample. It remains unclear if this biases the representativeness of the results in any particular way. An interesting question for furture research is whether or not top management is as consistently involved in international negotiations, as seems indicated by the present study.

There are striking differences in some perceptions about communication concepts between NABPs and LABPs. There are also some striking similarities. Members of both groups are very aware that there is a great possibility of being misunderstood by the other group.

Perhaps the best summary of the positions of the two groups can be found in their own words. In the free response section, the typical Latin American response is summarized by one subject, "The way they (North Americans) perceive Latin Americans is different. The major problem is that they do not understand the real situation of Latin America and it is very difficult to explain it to them, i.e., high interest charges, inflation, political relations, etc." "All they want to gain is 100% profit." On the other hand, the typical North American comment can be summarized by a respondent with twenty-three years experience, "There are not substantial major or serious problems in the communication between Latin and North American businessmen." It appears from the overall results of the study, that there is a bit of disagreement on that point.

REFERENCES

Ackermann, Jean Marie. "Skill Training for Foreign Assignments: The Reluctant U.S. Case." In Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter, Intercultural Communication: A Reader (2nd ed.). Wadsworth, 1976. (pp. 298-306).

Adams, T. F. M. and N. Kobayashi. The World of Japanese Business. Tokyo, 1969. (p. 147).

Goldhaber, Gerald. Organizational Communication (2nd ed.). Dubuque: W. C. Brown, 1974.

Hall, Edward T. and William Foote Whyte. "Intercultural Communication: A Guide to Men of Action." In Alfred G. Smith, Communication and Culture. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, Inc., 1966. (pp. 567-576).

Hall, Edward T. Beyond Culture. New York: Anchor Books, 1976.

Hovland, C. I., I. L. Janis, and H. H. Kelley. Communication and Persuasion. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.

The International Executive. "Adaptability Interviews in Selecting Individuals for Foreign Service." Spring/Summer, 1980, vol. 22, #2. (p. 24).

McCroskey, James. "Oral Communication Apprehension: State of the Art." Human Communication Research. Fall, 1977, vol. 4, #1.

McCroskey, James, and L. R. Wheeless. Introduction to Human Communication. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976.

Vaid Raizada, Vishirt K. "Multi-Ethnic Corporations and Inter-Ethnic Conflict." Human Resources Management. Fall, 1981, vol. 20, #3.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR COMPANY:

1. About how many employees does you company have? _____
2. How many divisions or departments does your company have? _____
3. How many years has your company been in operation? _____
4. What is the major activity of your company? _____
5. How many years have you been with this company? _____
6. What is your present position? _____
7. What are your major responsibilities? _____
8. How long have you held your present position? _____
9. What is your educational background? _____
10. How many times have you visited Latin America? _____
11. What percentage of your company's total business is carried on with Latin American concerns? _____
12. On the average, how many business meetings do you have, in a typical month, with Latin American business professionals? _____
13. What percentage of your job is concerned with North American business?

_____